

What is the Harris County Survivor Services in Immigration Law (SSIL) Program?

The purpose of the SSIL is to provide legal representation for immigrant community members, children and families who have survived crime and need immigration legal assistance. Within Harris County, many immigrants and their families face the constant fear of arrest and deportation - leading to increased mental health stressors that impact our wider community health.

Harris County strives to keep residents safe and is committed to ensuring immigrants have access to fair and affordable legal representation in immigration cases. Having an attorney ensures that an individual's right to due process is protected and can help prevent tragic family separation. Harris County values the rights of its immigrant and refugee residents and is committed to ensuring they have access to legal representation and supportive services.

Who qualifies for SSIL legal services?

People must be 1) a survivor of crime 2) a Harris County resident and 3) meet the income requirements:

1. Survivors of Crime

Individuals and their immediate family members (children, siblings, spouse, and parents) are eligible for services under the SSIL if they are a victim, witness, or bystander of crime. Crime victims are encouraged to report crime to a law enforcement agency but are not required to report in order to receive services.

For the purpose of the SSIL program, a victim, witness, or bystander of crime is defined as a person who has *“suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering or trauma, or economic loss as a result of a criminal actor”* or *“has suffered personal injury or death as a result of the criminal conduct of another.”* Criminal acts include but are not limited to *sexual assault; kidnapping; aggravated robbery; trafficking of persons; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; wage theft; or domestic violence.*

2. Harris County Residency

The person seeking services must live in Harris County.

If a survivor of crime has had to temporarily leave the county as a result of crime, such as seeking shelter for their safety, they may still qualify for the program so long as 1) they formerly lived in Harris County, and 2) they intend to reside in Harris County once it is safe for them to do so.

- Survivor must have prior documented work history in Harris County, and/or documentation of occupied residency in Harris County (lease, utility bill, or similar documentation with person's name, or verification via third party of residency) from

- before they temporarily left.
- Intent to reside, by itself, is not enough to qualify for this program.

3. Income Requirement

This program is for Harris County residents who earn less than 80% of the median family income, as set out in the chart below.

If a survivor of crime has a household income that is higher than the amount listed here, but cannot access any funds as a direct result of the crime, they may still qualify for the program.

- *How to use the chart:* Select how many family members live in the home. If the total income for *everyone* is less than the number listed, you are eligible.

Family Size	Income
1	\$44,350
2	\$50,700
3	\$57,050
4	\$63,350
5	\$68,450
6	\$73,500
7	\$78,600
8	\$83,650

Source: <https://csd.harriscountytexas.gov/Documents/PY21%20Income%20Limits%20CDBG%20and%20ESG.pdf>

What kind of legal services are provided?

Legal services providers will provide a variety of services to survivors of crime, including but not limited to:

- Filing U visa, T visa, and VAWA petitions before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Legal representation before USCIS or the Immigration Court for Asylum, Permanent Residency (green cards), Withholding of Removal and Cancellation of Removal; and
- Other applications (for work authorization, travel documents, consular processing, fee waivers, etc.) which enable immigrant survivors to stabilize their lives.

- Survivors will also be referred to social services programs, including counseling, as needed.

What documents are required to prove someone qualifies?

Legal services providers will accept a variety of evidence to prove income and current Harris County residence, including *but not limited to*:

- Harris County Residence:
 - Valid Texas driver's license or Texas ID
 - Documented work history in Harris County (valid work ID, pay stubs, letter from employer)
 - Documentation of occupied residency in Harris County (lease, utility bill, or official mail sent to person's home within last 30 days)
- Income
 - Tax documents (eg: filings from previous year)
 - Pay stubs or letter from employer
- Crime Victim Status:
 - Police reports
 - Witness statements
 - Other documentation that supports an individual's status as a crime victim
- Statement-Attestation Form
 - For people who are in an unsafe home situation or do not have access to any documents to prove income, residency, or evidence of being a crime survivor, they may provide a written statement (also called a self-attestation form) to meet these requirements.

How can community members access the program?

- Contact the organizations directly. The SSIL partners are nonprofits with valid 501(c)3 status, with a record of providing high-quality legal representation to immigrants facing removal. Partners include:
- BakerRipley: (346) 867-3871
- Catholic Charities Cabrini Center: (713) 595-4100
- Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project: (713) 561-3059 or community@ghirp.org
- Tahirih Justice Center, (survivors of gender-based violence only) (713) 496-0100

Harris County Survivor Services in Immigration Law (SSIL)

The Harris County Survivor Services in Immigration Law program provides representation for community members who have survived crime and need immigration legal assistance.

To qualify for services someone must be:

- 1) a survivor of crime or their immediate family member
- 2) a Harris County resident and
- 3) Have a low to median income (for instance, under \$63,350 for a family of 4).

Legal services providers will assist community members based on capacity. They will provide a variety of services to survivors of crime, such as helping file U Visa and VAWA petitions.

Documents Needed:

Legal services providers will accept a variety of evidence to prove income and current Harris County residence, *for example:*

- Harris County Residence:
 - Valid Texas driver's license or Texas ID
 - Documented work history (work ID, pay stubs, letter from employer)
 - Lease, utility bills, or official mail sent to person's home within last 30 days
- Income
 - Tax documents (eg: filings from previous year)
 - Pay stubs or letter from employer
- Crime Victim Status:
 - Police reports
 - Witness statements
 - Other documentation that supports an individual's status as a crime victim

If a crime survivor does not have the required documents due to an unsafe home situation, they can sign an oath stating that they meet the requirements.

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